



**JARAMOGI OGINGA ODINGA UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

October 2016

Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology

Corporate Communications Policy

2016

© Copyright JOOUST 2016

This policy was written and produced by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology

P.O. Box 210-40601 Bondo, Kenya

Telephone: + 254 - 57 2501804 / 2058000

Fax: + 254 - 572523851

Email: vc@jooust.ac.ke

Website: <http://www.jooust.ac.ke>

Policy Title: Corporate Communications

Policy Theme: Provision of quality corporate communications services aimed at fostering and maintaining positive relations between the University and its stakeholders

Policy Contact: Corporate Communications Manager

Approval Authority: The Council


Category: Corporate Communication Services

Reference No: JOOUST/VC/PR/018

Status: Approved by Council pursuant to Minute: 7/02/10/2016

Commencement Date: 13th October 2016

Signed:



Vice-Chancellor, Secretary to Council
Prof. S. G. Agong'

14/12/2016.

Date



Chairman of Council
Dr. B. J. Mwandotto

14/12/2016

Date

Table of Contents

PREAMBLE	5
DEFINITION OF TERMS	6
1.0 INTRODUCTION	7
1.1 Aim	7
1.2 Scope	7
1.3 Guiding principles	7
1.3.1 <i>Efficiency and effectiveness</i>	7
1.3.3 <i>Openness and accountability</i>	7
1.3.4 <i>Timeliness</i>	7
1.3.5 <i>Equity</i>	7
1.3.6 <i>Confidentiality</i>	7
1.3.7 <i>Continual Improvement</i>	7
1.4 Official language(s) of communication	7
2.0 METHODS OF COMMUNICATION	8
2.1. <i>Written communication</i>	8
2.2. <i>Oral Communication</i>	8
2.3. <i>Electronic communication</i>	8
2.4. <i>Meetings</i>	9
2.5. <i>Face to face communication</i>	9
2.6. <i>Communication for and with people with disabilities</i>	9
2.7. <i>Non-verbal communication</i>	9
3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES	9
3.1 <i>External Communication</i>	9
3.2 <i>Spokespersons</i>	9
3.3 <i>Media relations</i>	10
3.4 <i>Corporate advertising</i>	10
3.5 <i>Internal communication</i>	10
3.6 <i>Communication with staff and students</i>	10
3.7 <i>Corporate identity</i>	11
3.8 <i>Divisional and departmental heads' responsibilities</i>	11
3.9 <i>Responsibility of all staff</i>	12
3.10 <i>Crisis Communication</i>	12
4.0 RESTRICTIONS AND CONFIDENTIALITY	13
4.1 <i>Individual liberties and responsibilities</i>	13
4.2 <i>Contacts with the media</i>	13
5.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND CO-ORDINATION	13
6.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION	13
7.0 REVIEW	14

PREAMBLE

Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology values open and proactive communication that guarantees customers', partners' and stakeholders' receipt of information, taking into account their views and concerns in the planning, management and evaluation of programmes, services and initiatives. This Communication Policy serves as an important aspect of our continued efforts to build and retain local and global trust in the University as a corporate brand. It provides guidelines for how communication should be conducted to ensure that it fits within the wider strategic interest of the University. The Policy, therefore, provides guidelines for how the University managers and the general staff ought to act in their daily communications with internal and external stakeholders. It covers objectives; division of responsibilities, and general guidelines and methods for communicating with and among various groups.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Corporate communication:	Activities undertaken by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOOUST) to communicate with its internal and external stakeholders and the general public, with a view to cultivating and maintaining JOOUST’s corporate mindset, identity and image.
Crisis:	An emergency situation of adverse nature, which is not within the immediate control of the University, and which threatens the well being of the University in specific or general terms.
Customer:	Someone who consumes or receive services or products of JOOUST
External communication:	Exchange of information between the University and other organizations, groups or individuals outside of the JOOUST’s formal structure.
Internal communication:	Exchange of information between or among employees across all levels of the University
Media:	Various channels used by the University in conveying information.
Spokesperson:	Vice-Chancellor
Stakeholder:	A person, a group or an organization that has a stake or interest in the University.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim

The aim of this Policy is to ensure that communication from Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology to its employees, customers, partners, and stakeholders and all other publics are well coordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the diverse information needs of its entire stakeholder base in a way that supports the aspirations and mandate of the University.

1.2 Scope

The Policy applies to members of the Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology Senate, Management, staff and students. It sets out the principles that the University has adopted for effective management of all communication programmes and processes.

1.3 Guiding principles

The University undertakes to strive to provide its stakeholders with timely, accurate, clear objective and complete information about its policies, programmes, services and initiatives. To realise its communication goals and objectives, in line with its vision, mission and core values, this Policy espouses the following principles:

1.3.1 Efficiency and effectiveness

The University shall ensure that communication is effective and relevant to its recipients through use of appropriate channels and tools. The University will convey information and respond to enquiries without undue delay to request by the media and other stakeholders.

1.3.2 Clarity

The University undertakes to transmit clear, uniform and easy-to-read and easy-to-understand information that does not leave room for misinterpretation.

1.3.3 Openness and accountability

The University shall endeavour at all times to uphold openness in its dealings. It shall be ready to openly dialogue with stakeholders on all matter pertaining to its management. Where information cannot be disclosed, the reason for such non-disclosure shall be given to the concerned parties in confidence or otherwise.

1.3.4 Timeliness

The University shall ensure that all information reaches the intended recipients at the time when it is needed.

1.3.5 Equity

Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology upholds equity as a key value in all its operations. All enquiries are addressed in an equitable, objective and unbiased manner throughout the communication process.

1.3.6 Confidentiality

The University encourages open door policy in all its operations in general and in its communication processes in particular. However, the University shall observe strict confidentiality, if desired, to protect the name or reputation of the University, staff, students, partner organisations or a stakeholder.

1.3.7 Continual Improvement

The communication programmes and processes shall be reviewed periodically with a view to enhancing efficient delivery of effective outcomes.

1.4 Official language(s) of communication

1.4.1 The University shall conduct its communication in English. The grammar for written communication shall be in the Standard English only. For spelling, either the

Standard English version or the American version of the English language is accepted. Use of both versions in the same document is, however, not acceptable.

- 1.4.2 Kiswahili is the other official and national language as per the Constitution of Kenya and is recognised as such by this Policy. Only the Standard version of the language (Kiswahili sanifu) shall be used in written documents.
- 1.4.3 The University may use any other languages, including vernaculars, if such use is deemed necessary to enhance communication, or is the only means to communicate, with a specific stakeholder, or stakeholder group, provided that such use is not intended to preclude others in a manner that is discriminatory or prejudicial.
- 1.4.4 As much as possible, the University shall employ the Kenyan sign language in conferences seminars and other fora where this is desirable.

2.0 METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

2.1. Written communication

- 2.1.1 The University shall use letters, memos, minutes, circulars, notices and other approved forms of written communication to reach its various interlocutors internally and externally.
- 2.1.2 All written communications should be simple and easy to read and understand, and shall be devoid of slang, offensive or discriminatory language. Ethnic slur, obscenity and sexist innuendos are unacceptable.
- 2.1.3 A uniform format of writing documents shall be established and adhered to.
- 2.1.4 Letters, memos and other approved forms of written communication should provide complete and clear information, devoid of ambiguity.
- 2.1.5 Letters will be dispatched in good time and with due confidentiality.
- 2.1.6 Memos shall be drafted clearly and accurately and dispatched promptly, with the recipient(s) and confidentiality status clearly indicated.
- 2.1.7 Appropriate language and format shall be used in writing memos to avoid communication breakdown.
- 2.1.8 Notices to be posted on notice boards shall be cleared by Corporate Communications Office and thereafter strategically posted for easy access by staff and students.
- 2.1.9 For internal communication, a copy shall be filed both at the source and destination for reference.
- 2.1.10 Fax messages and e-mail shall be correctly documented and delivered to the intended recipient(s) as soon as possible.

2.2. Oral Communication

- 2.2.1 The recommended procedure for handling incoming calls shall be adhered to for landline and mobile telephone communications.
- 2.2.2 Where necessary, mobile phone voice communications will be complemented with written communication.
- 2.2.3 Telephone messages shall be correctly documented and delivered to the recipient(s) as soon as possible.

2.3. Electronic communication

Electronic communication shall be guided by the University ICT Policy

2.4. Meetings

The University shall use meetings as a forum for involving staff in decision making and problem solving. Schools, departments and sections/units shall hold regular meetings. During meetings the following procedure shall apply:

- 2.4.1 All staff shall have equal chance to make their contribution.
- 2.4.2 Meeting shall be held at a time and venue that allow and encourage input by all participants.
- 2.4.3 Except for crisis or emergency meetings, the agenda items for a meeting shall be circulated 24 hours prior to the meeting.
- 2.4.4 Meetings shall be managed in a manner that ensures that they remain focused on the set agenda.
- 2.4.5 Information from meetings shall be made available to all relevant staff and feedback provided the appropriate channels.
- 2.4.6 Deans, Director's, Heads of department and sectional heads shall ensure that staff are given necessary information arising from meetings.

2.5. Face to face communication

All University staff and students are encouraged to engage each other in discussions of various issues. This should be done with respect and decorum.

2.6. Communication for and with people with disabilities

- 2.6.1 The University shall create an environment that is safe and supportive of people with disabilities.
- 2.6.2 Alternative methods of communication shall be provided to enable effective communication with people with disability.
- 2.6.3 Staff are encouraged to show extra compassion when communicating with people with disabilities.

2.7. Non-verbal communication

- 2.7.1 The University shall use non-verbal communication to reinforce, complement or substitute verbal communication where necessary.
- 2.7.2 Corporate branding shall be promoted to create and enhance corporate identity and image.
- 2.7.3 Friday is designated as the corporate day and employees are encouraged to don University branded attire.
- 2.7.4 Staff and students are expected to portray the University's corporate culture, which is characterized by decency and sensitivity to occasion and environment, in their mode of dressing and self presentation.
- 2.7.5 The use of University corporate identity tools such as logo and letterhead for personal purposes is prohibited.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 External Communication

The Vice-Chancellor and the Corporate Communications Manager are responsible for ensuring that Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology communications programmes and processes are in compliance with this Corporate Communication Policy.

3.2 Spokespersons

- 3.2.1 The Vice-Chancellor is the principal spokesperson on University-wide matters, and may, as he or she deems appropriate, delegate this role to specific senior officers on specific matters.
- 3.2.2 Media contacts shall be handled by or referred to the Corporate Communications Office.

- 3.2.3 Other employees are not permitted to make statements on behalf of the University; but are not prevented from making personal statements as citizens of Kenya on issues unrelated to the University's functions and operations.
- 3.2.4 All enquiries on official policies or correspondence to and from foreign missions and subsequent responses shall be channelled through the Kenya Government ministry in charge of universities. The same shall apply to other ministries and international organisations.
- 3.2.5 Staff and students are discouraged from corresponding directly with various arms and organs of Government on matters relating to the University or on their employment without express clearance by the Vice-Chancellor.

3.3 Media relations

The Corporate Communications Manager shall be the University's link with the media in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor who is the official spokesperson of the University.

- 3.3.1 Information to the media shall be generated, processed and disseminated through appropriate channels and in liaison with relevant organs of the University.
- 3.3.2 All media conferences and media briefings, facility visits and other media events shall be organised by the Corporate Communications Manager in liaison with the Vice-Chancellor.
- 3.3.3 The University shall be impartial in providing information to media outlets.
- 3.3.4 The University shall maintain a culture of openness in dealing with the media.
- 3.3.5 Schools and departments shall channel and refer media enquiries to the Corporate Communications Manager.
- 3.3.6 The Corporate Communications Manager shall deal with the media in an accurate and objective manner and without undue delay.

3.4 Corporate advertising

- 3.4.1 The University shall use print, electronic and other media for advertising;
- 3.4.2 All University advertising requests shall be coordinated by the Corporate Communications Manager and approved by the Vice-Chancellor or the respective Deputy Vice-Chancellors;
- 3.4.3 All advertising engagements and commitments with the media shall be executed by the Corporate Communications Manager, which shall ensure that they are consistent - in their design, tone and general appearance - with the University's corporate identity and corporate culture;
- 3.4.4 Use of University coat of arms for advertising by collaborating or other organisations without express permission from the Vice-Chancellor is prohibited and may attract legal action;
- 3.4.5 Production of promotional University items shall, at all times, reflect the correct institutional name and coat of arms. Where there are uncertainties, the concerned parties shall consult the Corporate Communications Manager.

3.5 Internal communication

- 3.5.1 The Corporate Communications Manager shall manage and maintain internal communication tools including notice board, newsletter, etc. to facilitate communication between management and staff and students.
- 3.5.2 The Corporate Communications Manager shall be responsible for developing and maintaining guidelines for the University's corporate identity and graphical appearance;

3.6 Communication with staff and students

The University shall:

- 3.6.1 Encourage openness in internal communication and sharing of information.
- 3.6.2 Uphold the culture of consultation between the management and staff, and students over University affairs, in a way that enhances effective communication.
- 3.6.3 Seek constantly to improve customer care for students in the provision of information.

- 3.6.4 Monitor and evaluate student needs and views through surveys, focus groups, liaison groups and committees.
- 3.6.5 Ensure all internal communications are expressed in clear, easy-to-understand English.
- 3.6.6 As far as possible, ensure staff and/or students are directly informed of important University issues well before media or other external bodies.
- 3.6.7 Facilitate staff training on internal communication, including committee chairing, personal communication skills, and customer care, organizing information, and managing departmental communications.
- 3.6.8 Arrange induction of new staff on communication skills and good internal communication practice.

3.7 Corporate identity

Whereas the Corporate Communications Office shall be the custodian and reference point on matters relating to the University's corporate identity, it is the responsibility of all members of staff to build and maintain a correct corporate identity through:

- 3.7.1 **Coat of Arms:** The Coat of Arms is the official Symbol of Identity, approved by the Council, of which the Vice-Chancellor is the custodian. It is intended for specific uses only such as: award of Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees, the Mace, University Seals, Rubber stamps, Receipts and Graduation Gowns. The Coat of Arms is registered as per the Blazon in 3.7.2.
- 3.7.2 **Blazon:** " Party per" Or, azure and vert. In chief Or, a rock statant counter-ermine, rising sun Or, a coiffer sideways counter gules and argent in lozenges. On base dexter a tetrahedron proper argent with lines gules and argent. Base saltire a weighing scale balanced sable and cogwheel move argent. Stable vine wreath vert in dexter, counterchanged in sinister. Lower scroll Or, motto " OASIS OF KNOWLEDGE"
- 3.7.3 **Logo:** The Logo is derived from the actual Coat of Arms for use as JOOUST's Corporate Identity to be used for public utility on all official documents and communication materials such as: Stationery, Envelopes, Business cards; Websites; Sports Shields, T shirts, Flags; Apparel; Lab Coats, Staff Uniforms, Shirts, Blouses, ties, Caps; Cutlery: Cups, Plates, Mugs; University Vehicles, Signage, Door labels, Posters, Calendars, Gifts, General Advertisements, Newspapers Advertisements, Key holders, and Animated Television Advertisements.
- 3.7.4 **Colour(s):** The University shall have specific colour or colours or colour scheme known to all employees and students as the official colour or colours or colour scheme. These colours are specified in the registered Coat of Arms as Gold (*Or*), Blue (*Azure*), Green(*Vert*) see Blazon 3.7.2. above.
- 3.7.5 **Flag:** The University shall have its flag, which shall capture and reflect the University's colour scheme, vision, mission core values, mandate, objectives and functions.
- 3.7.6 **Type face:** There shall be an official type face for the University for the purposes of correspondence.
- 3.7.7 All Divisions, Department and Units are expected to adhere to the coat of arms, colours, fonts, motto and taglines. Use of the University coat of arms by persons, including staff and students, to brand personal effects is prohibited.
- 3.7.8 A proposal to change, vary or substitute, temporarily or permanently, the colours, fonts, coat of arms, symbols, flags or tagline shall be presented to the Senate, which shall deliberate and forward its recommendations to the Council for consideration.

3.8 Divisional and departmental heads' responsibilities

The University's divisional and departmental heads shall act as role models, demonstrating good practice in all aspect of communication, and:

- 3.8.1 Manage communication processes at divisional/departmental levels.

- 3.8.2 Work with the Corporate Communications Office to facilitate interdivisional/departmental communication and mass media-related communication
- 3.8.3 Ensure that locally produced communication materials such as newsletters, flyers, and brochures, conform to the University's quality guidelines and standards.
- 3.8.4 Ensure that communication systems and process actively support the vision, mission and strategic objectives of the University;
- 3.8.5 Ensure effective two-way communication between management and staff;
- 3.8.6 Where staff and/or students raise issues of poor communication, take action to ensure the issues are dealt with satisfactorily;
- 3.8.7 Ensure effective lateral communication between staff, and students and other stakeholders.
- 3.8.8 Support and promote a culture that encourages inclusion and involvement in all communication processes;
- 3.8.9 Ensure that communication related issues that cannot be addressed at their level are referred to the right levels.

3.9 Responsibility of all staff

University employees shall:

- 3.9.1 Strive to know and internalise the principles of good communication practices as espoused by this Policy;
- 3.9.2 Ensure that they communicate effectively and appropriately in line with the standards for communication;
- 3.9.3 Ensure that information is shared responsibly, appropriately and in a timely manner.
- 3.9.4 In situations where stakeholders raise issues relating to poor and/or inappropriate communication, consider such feedback carefully and adjust their communication style accordingly.

3.10 Crisis Communication

General guidelines: In the event of a crisis or an emergency, the following general guideline shall apply:

- i. The Vice-Chancellor shall constitute a crisis communication team with the responsibility to collect and collate relevant information on the incident.
- ii. The Vice-Chancellor shall initiate and maintain regular and on-time communication with stakeholders through appropriate channels.
- iii. The crisis Committee shall gather details and come up with strategies for communication with internal and external stakeholders.
- iv. The Vice-Chancellor and the Corporate Communications Manager shall ensure that the internal publics (staff and students) are given important information pertaining to the crisis ahead of the media.
- v. No member of staff shall submit any information to the news media without the express clearance of the Vice-Chancellor.
- vi. Upon clearance by the Vice-Chancellor, the Corporate Communications Manager shall release relevant appropriate and verifiable information to news media regarding the crisis.
- vii. The Corporate Communications Manager shall monitor media coverage and brief the crisis communication team, and, where appropriate, respond accordingly.
- viii. The Corporate Communications Manager shall, as appropriate, arrange media briefing by the Management or the crisis communication team.
- ix. The crisis communication team shall analyse and compile a report on the crisis and integrate the lessons learnt into the University's crisis management system.

4.0 RESTRICTIONS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Internal and external communications are subject to various restrictions resulting from legislation such as the Official Secrets Act, regulations, standards and agreements relating to the prevailing operating environment, customers and terms of employment as well as business considerations. Employees are bound by certain confidentiality with regard to information that is for internal use, relates to customers or competition, or could potentially be damaging to the University's reputation and/or business interests or has potential of attracting litigation. In the event of uncertainty with regard to confidentiality issues, employees should contact their immediate superiors.

4.1 Individual liberties and responsibilities

4.1.1 University employees are encouraged to actively participate in discussions and debate in their fields of expertise as a way of enhancing both their own knowledge and the standing of the University as a beacon in training, research and sustainable development.

4.1.2 Rules and procedures pertaining to contributions to technical journals, participation in meetings and related matters shall encourage and facilitate such activities, while providing mechanisms to safeguard reputation of both the individual and the University.

4.2 Contacts with the media

4.2.1 The Vice-Chancellor is the spokesperson for the University on all matters of policy. He/she may, at his/her discretion, delegate this role to another senior member of staff.

4.2.2 Corporate Communications Manager has the general responsibility of fostering and maintaining good relations with the media. Media relations shall be proactive with the overriding strategy of enhancing the reputation of the University as a citadel of academic excellence, research and innovation.

4.2.3 A member of staff who wishes to publish a commentary or an opinion piece in a newspaper, a magazine or any other print mass media outlet, or talk to or on radio or television on topical issues, is free to do so. The member of staff may identify himself or herself as an employee of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology provided that the article bears a standard disclaimer that "the views contained in the article represent the views of the author(s), and not necessarily those of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology".

4.2.4 Use of the University's name, acronym, coat of arms or other corporate identity materials in any form of communication by employees or students in any medium in a way that has the potential to bring the University into disrepute or otherwise portray the University in bad light, is prohibited.

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND CO-ORDINATION

In addition to the responsibilities assigned to various offices as specified above:

The Vice-Chancellor shall as the University Spokesperson ensure that the Corporate Communications Office has the requisite resources, with optimum levels of qualified staff, budgetary allocation, equipment and office space, to fulfill the requirements of this Policy.

The Corporate Communications Manager shall:

- (a) Coordinate this Policy;
- (b) Establish and maintain continual information flows between the University and its stakeholders;
- (c) Devise and implement programmes, strategies and tools that support proactive communications between the University and all its stakeholders;
- (d) Ensure prudent and efficient management and utilisation of resources within the Corporate Communications Office

6.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Corporate Communications Manager shall:

- 6.1 Integrate strategies and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of this Policy.

6.2 Undertake regular checks on implementation of the Policy.

6.3 Make recommendations on possible areas of review.

7.0 REVIEW

The Policy is subject to review every three years and when there is a change in law that governs communications or as the need arises.